

In the Claims

1. (Previously Presented) A device for delivering channels of presentation streams in a television service network environment to subscribers, the device comprising:

5 a plurality of routing units, each routing unit for receiving a set of presentation streams corresponding to a programming channel, each of the presentation streams in each set carrying the same programming data but different advertisements corresponding to different market segments, wherein at least one of the routing units selectively switches between the presentation streams in the set to deliver one of the presentation streams in the set to said subscribers.

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2. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 1, wherein each of the routing units includes:

an ad location detector for detecting an advertisement insertion point in at least one of the [[a]] presentation streams in the set and generating a detection signal indicating this detection,

15 a selector, coupled to the detector, for selecting one of the presentation streams in the set that is most appropriate in response to the detection signal, and

a switch, coupled to the selector, for delivering the selected presentation stream to the subscribers.

20 3. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 2, wherein the ad location detector detects the ad insertion point by detecting a cue tone present in one of the presentation streams in the set.

4. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 2, wherein the ad location detector detects the ad insertion point based on scheduled avail time.

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Amendment

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5. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 2, wherein, when the ad insertion point is detected by the ad location detector, the selector compares market segments associated with the advertisements ads in the presentation streams with characteristics associated with at least one subscriber serviced by said device, identifies a presentation stream that is most appropriate based on said comparison and generates a switching signal to the switch to deliver the identified presentation stream.

6. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 5, wherein then the selector identifies one of the presentation streams in the set to be a default presentation stream and generates a switching signal to the switch to select the default presentation stream if said comparison does not identify a presentation stream.

7. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1, wherein the routing units receive the presentation streams through a delivery network, wherein the delivery network is one of the following: analog cable network, digital broadcast satellite (DBS) network, digital cable network, switched digital video (SDV) network, hybrid fiber coaxial (HFC) cable network, or the Internet.

8. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1, wherein the device is located at a cable node in a cable TV system.

20 9. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1, wherein the device is located at a head end of a television programming delivery system.

10. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1, wherein the device is located at a set top box.

11. (Previously Presented) The device of claim 1, wherein the device is located at a Universal Service Access Multiplexer (USAM) device in a Switched Digital Video (SDV) system.

12. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 1, wherein each of the presentation streams 5 carries an advertisement, ~~the advertisements~~ directed to an advertiser-specific market segment segments defined by different advertisers.

13. (Currently Amended) The device of claim 1, wherein each of the presentation streams carries the advertisements directed to different fixed market segments.

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14. (Previously Presented) A system for delivering channels of presentation streams carrying targeted advertisements to subscribers in a television service network environment, the system comprising:

15 channels, each of the presentation streams in each set carrying the same programming data but different advertisements directed to different market segments; and

20 a plurality of local routing stations coupled to the generator, each local routing station receiving the sets of presentation streams and selectively switching between the presentation streams in each set to deliver one presentation stream for at least one programming channel to at least one subscriber associated with said routing station.

15. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 14, further comprising:
an ad scheduler, coupled to the generator, for providing to the generator a schedule of advertisements to be included in the presentation streams for each set; and

a storage unit, coupled to the generator, for storing a library of advertisements and providing said advertisements to be included in the presentation streams for each set.

16. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 15, wherein the ad scheduler prepares the 5 schedule of advertisements based on market segment information, avail and ad information and subscriber information.

17. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 16, wherein the market segment 10 information identifies advertiser-specific market segments for all advertisers associated with the library of advertisements.

18. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 14, wherein each of the presentation streams in each set carries advertisements directed to advertiser-specific market segments defined by different advertisers.

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19. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 14, wherein each of the presentation streams in each set carries advertisements directed to different fixed market segments.

20. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 14, further comprising: 20 a delivery network, coupled to the generator and local routing stations, for delivering the sets of presentation streams from the generator to the local routing stations.

21. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 20, wherein the delivery network is one of the following: analog cable network, digital broadcast satellite (DBS) network, digital cable network, 25 switched digital video (SDV) network, hybrid fiber coaxial (HFC) cable network, or the Internet.

22. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 14, wherein each of the routing stations includes a plurality of routing units, each routing unit receiving one set of presentation streams; and wherein each routing unit includes,

5 an ad location detector for detecting advertisement location points in at least one of the presentation streams in the designated set,
a selector, coupled to the detector, for selecting one of the presentation streams in the designated set that is most appropriate for at least one subscriber served by said routing station in response to the detection results from the ad location detector, and

10 a switch, coupled to the selector, for delivery the selected presentation stream to the subscriber.

23. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 22, wherein, in each routing unit, the ad location detector detects the ad location point by detecting a cue tone present in one of the presentation streams in the designated set.

24. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 22, wherein, in each routing unit, the ad location detector detects the ad location point based on scheduled avail time.

20 25. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 22, wherein, in each routing unit, when the ad location point is detected by the ad location detector, the selector compares market segment characteristics associated with the ads inserted in the presentation streams, with characteristics associated with the subscribers served by the corresponding routing station, identifies a presentation stream that is most appropriate for the subscribers based on said comparison, and generates a switching signal to the 25 switch to select the identified presentation stream.

26. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 25, wherein the selector identifies one of the presentation streams in the set to be a default presentation stream and generates a switching signal to the switch to select the default presentation stream if said comparison does not identify the most appropriate presentation stream.

5 27. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 14, wherein each routing station is located at a cable node in a cable TV system.

10 28. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 14, wherein each routing station is located at a set top box.

15 29. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 14, wherein each routing station is located at a Universal Service Access Multiplexer (USAM) device in a Switched Digital Video (SDV) system.

30. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 14, wherein the routing stations are located at a head end of a television programming delivery system.

31. (Previously Presented) A method for delivering channels of presentation streams carrying targeted advertisements to subscribers in a television service network environment, the method comprising the steps of:

generating a set of presentation streams for each of a plurality of programming channels, each of the presentation streams in each set carrying the same programming data but different advertisements directed to different market segments;

25 delivering the sets of presentation streams to a plurality of local routing stations; and

selectively switching, by at least one of the local routing stations, between the presentation streams in each set to deliver one presentation stream for at least one programming channel to at least one subscriber.

5 32. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, further comprising the steps of:
generating a schedule of advertisements to be included in the presentation streams for each set;
and
storing a library of advertisements to be included in the presentation streams for each set.

10 33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 32, wherein the step of generating the schedule generates the schedule of advertisements based on market segment information, avail and ad information, and subscriber information.

15 34. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 33, wherein the market segment information identifies advertiser-specific market segments for all advertisers associated with the library of advertisements.

20 35. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, wherein the delivery step delivers the sets of presentation streams through one of the following: analog cable network, digital broadcast satellite (DBS) network, digital cable network, switched digital video (SDV) network, hybrid fiber coaxial (HFC) cable network, or the Internet.

25 36. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, wherein each of the routing stations includes a plurality of routing units, each routing unit receiving one set of presentation streams designated for one of the programming channels; and

wherein the switching step includes,

detecting, by at least one routing unit, an advertisement location point for one of the presentation streams in the designated set,

5 responsive to the detecting step, determining, by the one routing unit, which one of the presentation streams in the designated set is most appropriate for selection; and

selecting, by the one routing unit, the most appropriate presentation stream in the designated set based on results from the determining step.

37. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein the detecting step detects the

10 ad location point by detecting a cue tone present in one of the presentation streams in the designated set.

38. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein the detecting step detects the ad location point based on scheduled avail time.

15 39. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 36, wherein the determining step includes:

comparing, by the one routing unit, market segment characteristics associated with the ads inserted in the presentation streams, with characteristics associated with at least one subscriber served by the corresponding routing station; and

20 identifying a presentation stream carrying an advertisement corresponding to the matched market segment as the most appropriate presentation stream based on the comparison results.

40. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 39, wherein the determining step further includes:

25 if the comparing step indicates that there is no match, identifying a default presentation stream in the set as the most appropriate presentation stream.

41. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, wherein, in the switching step, each routing station is located at a cable node in a cable TV system.

5 42. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, wherein, in the switching step, each routing station is located at a set top box.

10 43. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, wherein, in the switching step, each routing station is located at a Universal Service Access Multiplexer (USAM) device in a switched digital video (SDV) system.

44. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, wherein the switching step is performed at a head end of a television programming delivery system.

15 45. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, wherein, in the generating step, each of the presentation streams in each set carries advertisements directed to advertiser-specific market segments defined by different advertisers.

20 46. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 31, wherein, in the generating step, each of the presentation streams in each set carries advertisements directed to different fixed market segments.

47. (New) An apparatus for presenting an appropriate presentation stream to a subscriber, the apparatus comprising:

a receiver to receive a plurality of presentation streams, wherein the presentation streams include same programming but different advertisements, wherein the different advertisements correspond to different market segments;

5 a selector to select one of the presentation streams for delivery to a subscriber, wherein selection is based on the advertisement that is most appropriate; and

a switch, responsive to said selector, to forward the selected presentation stream to the subscriber for presentation.

48. (New) The apparatus of claim 47, wherein said selector compares market segments associated with the advertisements within the presentation streams with characteristics associated with the subscriber in order to determine which advertisement is most appropriate.

49. (New) The apparatus of claim 47, further comprising a delivery network to deliver the selected presentation stream from said switch to the subscriber.

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50. (New) The apparatus of claim 47, further comprising an advertisement detector to detect an upcoming commercial break in the presentation streams.

51. (New) The method of claim 47, wherein specific presentation streams contain 20 advertisements for a specific market segment.

52. (New) A system for delivering an appropriate presentation stream to a subscriber, the system comprising:

a generator to generate a plurality of presentation streams, wherein each presentation stream 25 includes same programming but has different advertisements directed to different market segments; and

at least one switching device to receive the plurality of presentation streams from said generator and selectively switch between the presentation streams so as to forward a presentation stream with a most appropriate advertisement to a subscriber for presentation.

5 53. (New) The system of claim 52, further comprising:
an ad scheduler to provide said generator with a schedule of advertisements to be included in the presentation streams; and
an advertisement source to provide said generator with advertisements to be included in the presentation streams.

10 54. (New) The system of claim 53, wherein said ad scheduler prepares the schedule of advertisements based on at least some subset of market segment information, avail information, advertisement information and subscriber information.

15 55. (New) The system of claim 52, wherein said generator generates specific presentation streams containing advertisements for a specific market segment.

56. (New) The system of claim 52, wherein said at least one switching device includes
a selector to select the presentation stream with the most appropriate advertisement to the
20 subscriber; and
a switch, responsive to the selector, to forward the selected presentation stream to the subscriber for presentation.

57. (New) The apparatus of claim 56, wherein the selector compares market segments associated with the advertisements within the presentation streams with characteristics associated with the subscriber in order to determine which advertisement is most appropriate.

5 58. (New) The system of claim 52, further comprising a delivery network to deliver the selected presentation stream from said switching device to the subscriber.

59. (New) A method for delivering an appropriate presentation stream to a subscriber, the method comprising:

10 receiving a plurality of presentation streams, wherein each presentation stream includes same programming but has different advertisements directed to different market segments;

selectively switching between the presentation streams so as to forward a presentation stream with a most appropriate advertisement; and

delivering the selected presentation stream to a subscriber.

15 60. (New) The method of claim 59, wherein said selectively switching includes selecting the presentation stream with the most appropriate advertisement to the subscriber; and switching, responsive to said selecting, a switch to forward the selected presentation stream to the subscriber for presentation.

20 61. (New) The method of claim 60, wherein said selecting includes comparing market segment characteristics associated with the advertisement within the presentation streams with characteristics associated with the subscriber.